

CLAIMS

1. A method for processing electronic gift certificates using a computer system or computer network, comprising the steps of:

receiving, from a presenter, a request for purchasing an electronic gift certificate including presenter information, recipient information, and usable amount of money;

sending said electronic gift certificate to a recipient specified by said recipient information; and

receiving, from said recipient, a request for purchasing goods at a business entity within the limits of said electronic gift certificate or with said electronic gift certificate being allotted thereto.

2. The method as described in claim 1, wherein security of communication in said steps of sending said electronic gift certificate and receiving said goods purchase request is lower than that in said step of receiving said electronic gift certificate purchase request.

3. The method as described in claim 1 or 2, wherein a special benefit for a specific goods category or goods, or for a specific presenter or recipient is annexed to said electronic gift certificate.

4. A system for processing electronic gift certificates using a computer system or computer network, comprising:

means for receiving, from a presenter, a request for purchasing an electronic gift certificate including presenter information, recipient information, and usable amount of money;

means for sending said electronic gift certificate to a recipient specified by said recipient information; and

means for receiving, from said recipient, a request for purchasing goods at a business entity within the limits of said electronic gift certificate or with said electronic gift certificate being allotted thereto.

5. The system as described in claim 4, wherein security of communication in said means for sending said electronic gift certificate and said means for receiving said goods purchase request is lower than that in said means for receiving said electronic gift certificate purchase request.

6. The system as described in claim 4 or 5, further comprising means for annexing to said electronic gift certificate a special benefit for a specific goods category or goods, or for a specific presenter or recipient.

7. A computer system configured as a system for processing electronic gift certificates, comprising:

means for accepting a purchase application for an electronic gift certificate from a presenter and settling a purchase transaction therefor;

means for sending said electronic gift certificate to a recipient; and

means for accepting, from said recipient, a purchase application for goods within the limits of said electronic gift certificate or with said electronic gift certificate being allotted thereto.

8. The computer system as described in claim 7, wherein security of communication in said means for sending said electronic gift certificate and said means for accepting said purchase application for goods is lower than that in said means for accepting said purchase application for said electronic gift certificate and settling said purchase transaction.

9. The computer system as described in claim 7 or 8, wherein means for annexing a special benefit for a specific goods category or goods, or for a specific presenter or recipient is provided in said means for accepting said purchase application for said electronic gift certificate and settling said purchase transaction, or said means for accepting said purchase application for goods.

10. A computer-readable recording medium recording a program to be executed by a computer to process electronic gift certificates, said program having the following functions implemented by said computer:

a function for accepting a purchase application for an electronic gift certificate from a presenter and settling a purchase transaction therefor;

a function for sending said electronic gift certificate to a recipient; and

a function for accepting, from said recipient, a purchase application for goods within the limits of said electronic gift certificate or with said electronic gift certificate being allotted thereto.